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Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment Invests \$5.6 Million in Wisconsin Health Workforce Well-Being

Partnerships with Wisconsin Hospital Association and Wisconsin Medical Society aim to address burnout, support mental health of health workers

Milwaukee, Wis. – April 28, 2025 – The [Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment](#) (AHW), Wisconsin's largest health philanthropy, will invest more than \$5.6 million over the next five years in projects designed to enhance the professional well-being of the state's health workforce as an upstream effort to improve the overall health of Wisconsin.

Building upon a commitment AHW Director Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, made in 2024 to invest up to \$10 million to support focused initiatives across Wisconsin to combat burnout and increase job satisfaction among Wisconsin's healthcare and public health workers, AHW will fund a scalable, evidence-based strategy implemented by the [Wisconsin Hospital Association \(WHA\)](#) to improve health workforce well-being and support a statewide health workforce professional services program to be administered by the [Wisconsin Medical Society \(WisMed\)](#).

Medical College of Wisconsin Associate Professor of Otolaryngology Michael Stadler, MD, FACS, who recently transitioned from serving as chief medical officer at Froedtert Hospital to champion AHW's Health Workforce Well-Being Landmark Initiative said, "A thriving health workforce is critical for ensuring that people in our state achieve their full potential. When health workers are supported and well, they can offer better, more compassionate care, while also achieving enhanced professional fulfillment. Prioritizing their well-being leads to better health outcomes for all."

With a \$3.2 million award from AHW, WHA will build a collaborative coalition to develop a long-term professional well-being improvement plan focused on Wisconsin's healthcare and public health workers. The initiative will draw upon resources and expertise provided by [the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation](#), a national non-profit committed to safeguarding the well-being of healthcare professionals and an official partner to WHA in this important work.

"We are honored to have been selected as a recipient of funding from the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment," said WHA Chief Quality Officer Nadine Allen, MBA, CPHQ. "Addressing healthcare worker well-being requires moving beyond individual solutions to embrace long-term, systemic change," Allen continued. "By breaking down barriers to mental health support and adopting evidence-based strategies, we can strengthen Wisconsin's healthcare workforce and improve care for the communities they serve. WHA looks forward to the partnership with Dr. Stadler and the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation to further this important work."

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“By launching these initiatives, Wisconsin is demonstrating its leadership on fostering interprofessional collaboration that truly reduces burnout, normalizes help-seeking, and strengthens professional wellbeing for the entire healthcare workforce,” said Stefanie Simmons, MD, FACEP, chief medical officer of the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes’ Foundation. “We’re honored to collaborate with Wisconsin’s leading healthcare organizations to accelerate the pace of change for improving health workers’ wellbeing and mental health and, ultimately, ensuring quality, compassionate care for all Wisconsinites.”

A \$2.5 million grant from AHW will allow WisMed—in collaboration with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Dental Association, the Wisconsin Nurses Association, the Wisconsin Academy of Physician Assistants, and other professional membership organizations across Wisconsin—to establish the Wisconsin Healthcare Professional Services Program (WIHPSP), which will provide confidential referral and monitoring services for licensed healthcare professionals in Wisconsin who experience behavioral, psychiatric, substance use, or other potentially impairing conditions. The WIHPSP will coordinate detection, prevention, evaluation, treatment, and monitoring of licensed healthcare professionals with these conditions.

“The Wisconsin Medical Society is proud to receive this important grant—a vital step in creating a confidential program to support the health and well-being of Wisconsin’s physicians, dentists, pharmacists, physician assistants, nurses, and other providers,” stated Wisconsin Medical Society CEO Mike Flesher. “By prioritizing those who care for us, the Wisconsin Healthcare Professional Services Program will better support our 260,000 licensed healthcare professionals and ensure all Wisconsinites receive high-quality care from a stable, supported, and healthy workforce for years to come.”

Health workforce well-being is one of [three Landmark Initiatives](#) prioritized by AHW in its 2024-2028 Five-Year Plan. The others are childhood behavioral health and hypertension control. AHW Landmark Initiatives leverage AHW’s unique capacity to tap both state and national experts, convene stakeholders, and provide support for large-scale health improvement projects to address pressing statewide health challenges.

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About the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment

The Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) is Wisconsin’s largest health improvement philanthropy. AHW was established by the Medical College of Wisconsin to steward a generous financial gift from Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin. Since 2004, AHW has invested over \$350 million in more than 750 health research, workforce development, and community health initiatives statewide. Learn more at www.ahwendowment.org.